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ment Association. Tharpe helped generate the statement of work defining NASA's requirements for a single source contractor as a member of the source evaluation board at Marshall Space Flight Center. He is now a member of the NASA Contract Acquisition Team.

A new role

Tharpe said that as a result of the new contract, NASA employees at KSC will get out of the day-to-day operations involved in preparing Shuttles for launch, gradually handing those functions over to the contractor. The government job will be to monitor and evaluate the contractor performance.

"In the beginning, KSC was a directorate of the Marshall Space Flight Center, we've always been involved in the daily operations. We can be involved in a different way. This role will in no way diminish NASA's overall impact to the program. But, we don't need to sign all procedures to process the flight hardware," Tharpe said to an attentive audience of about 150.

Launch execution, preparation

Government involvement in the Space Flight Operations Contract will focus on launch execution and preparation, including development, institution and the transition to the SFOC. The government also will be responsible for continued institutional support, including the KSC infrastructure.

In the area of development, the government will design and develop ground support equipment and bring it on-line for the SFOC. KSC's institution (non-Shuttle Processing Contract expenditures) will be funded by the Office of Space Flight (Code M). The government will continue to manage the 43 contracts that do not come under the SFOC.

"We will establish a way to transition roles and responsibilities so the work is performed satisfactorily before we, the government, step back," Tharpe explained.

"We need to think and view things a little differently now. I don't view this change as a negative and things will work out all right. The launch team of the future will have the most capable people as members. Our trademark has always been the best launch team in the world. The transition will be difficult, but KSC can help accomplish it."

The SFOC performance-based contract, which will be managed at Johnson Space Center in Houston, will be measured



ROY THARPE speaks to NASA Kennedy Space Center Management Association members Jan. 18 in the Space Station Processing Facility cafeteria.

against a predetermined set of metrics. For example, a work authorization document would be required to be technically accurate and available 100 percent of the time with a maximum error rate being available only three days prior to test start.

NASA will continue to have insight into the databases. Based on data, NASA can raise questions when warranted and conduct independent audits.

Next phase critical

This transition phase will be critical to the success of the space program, Tharpe said.

The cost of processing and launch will come down as areas of duplication are streamlined and optimized across the board.

Tharpe reflected on a similar situation in 1966 when Brown Engineering was awarded NASA's Mission Contract and the government role changed from doing the work to grading the contractors.

USA is motivated to protect the national resources of the space program, including the people and the hardware, Tharpe said.

NASA Administrator Dan Goldin said he wanted USA to do the job of processing and launching the Space Shuttle system.

Tharpe noted that by early 1997, USA will have already conducted at least one launch and will have had an award fee evaluation.

"KSC's team is the best in the world. The way we do things will end up being the best," he said.

USA . .

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at KSC on February 8 and 9. Their presentations were held in the LC39 area as well as the Training Auditorium in the KSC Industrial Area.

Mike McCulley introduced the corporate-level executives and helped answer employee questions about specific KSC impacts. McCulley is USA's associate program manager for ground operations, responsible for its activities at KSC.

The two corporate officials described the formation of USA, a joint venture of Rockwell International and Lockheed Martin, and addressed employee concerns about the status of their jobs, compensation and benefits in the transition to a single prime contract for Space Flight Operations.

The Shuttle processing work currently performed by Lockheed Martin and Rockwell will transition to USA in three phases over a five-year period, Black said.

Between June 1 and Oct. 1 of this year, USA plans to merge Lockheed Martin's Shuttle Processing Contract at KSC and Rockwell's Flight Operations Contract at Johnson Space Center. The 3,800 KSC employees and 3,000 JSC employees of Lockheed Martin and Rockwell under those existing contracts will become employees of United Space Alliance at that time. By the end of the summer, USA plans to absorb all of the orbiter subcontracts.

Phase II would occur by early 1997, when Shuttle support contracts are scheduled to be picked up by USA.

Phase III will be divided into several steps. It consists of contracts that included development effort at the time of the Shuttle Flight Operations Contract execution. It will eventually include the solid rocket boosters, external tank and Space Shuttle main engines.

USA will be headquartered in Houston where the NASA Shuttle program office is based, Black said.

Even though one of the goals of the transition is to reduce the numbers of employees, Black said no immediate or major layoffs are planned.

"It will be a gradual evolving process," he said. "I would hope most, if not all, of the reductions will be made through attrition."

Most Lockheed Martin and Rockwell employees who work directly with the Shuttle Processing and Flight Operations contracts will automatically become USA employees. Employees will not have to apply to keep their jobs, Adamson assured.

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